



Hazel Oak School

Attendance Policy



Hazel Oak School

September 2024

To be reviewed July 2025

Agreed by Governors onDate

Signed by.....Chair of Governor

Introduction and Background

At Hazel Oak School we recognise that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential to raising standards in pupil attainment and to give every child/young person the best educational experience possible. Good attendance is everyone's responsibility.

It is well documented that children who attend school regularly have better outcomes in their attainment as well as their well-being and positive life experiences.

The Education Act 1996 (section 444) states every child of compulsory school age is entitled to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education, either by attendance at a school, or by education otherwise than at a school.

When you register your child at school, you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends that school regularly. This means your child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances, such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Department for Education has produced guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities: Working together to improve school attendance. Our Attendance Policy reflects the key principles of that guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improveschool-attendance>

Promoting and maintaining excellent school attendance is a whole school responsibility and our policy details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved as well as the procedures that are in place to ensure and monitor regular pupil attendance. Our aim is to:

- Promote a positive and welcoming environment where children feel safe, secure and valued
- Promote and ensure children's welfare and safeguarding
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled to enabling them to succeed both in school and in the future
- Raise awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently
- Provide help and support for pupils and families where there are barriers to school attendance

This policy links to the following other policies:

- Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School
- Accessibility Plan
- Child Protection
- SEND
- Children Missing Education

Who is Responsible for Attendance Issues in School

At Hazel Oak School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and well-being and work together to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils at our school.

Roles and Responsibilities

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

Governors

- To monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.
- To communicate the importance of regular attendance to parents and pupils

Head Teacher

- To ensure that the school's aims for attendance are shared regularly with parents and carers, with an emphasis on learning and achievement
- To provide Governors with information on attendance, including low attendees and action taken to address this.

Deputy Head Teacher with support from the Family and Attendance Support Worker

- To monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.
- To work in partnership with key agencies if attendance and/or punctuality when it is an issue.
- To write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance.
- To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.

Class Teacher

- To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class using the SIMS system.
- To record the reasons for absence given to them on the 'comments' section of SIMS.

- To respond promptly to any issue raised in the weekly analysis of registers by Office Staff.
- To organise work to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness.

Office Staff

- To record children arriving late or leaving early on a daily basis
- To prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of the SIMS Attendance Manager System.
- To monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports when necessary.
- To contact any parent who has not informed the school as to why their child is absent on the first day of absence.
- To ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child at the end of each week.
- To make a judgement in conjunction with the Deputy/Head Teacher whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school is:

Andy Simms
0121 744 4162
c/o office@hazel-oak.solihull.sch.uk

The contact details for pupils and parents/carers to contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Hazel Oak School Office
0121 744 4162
office@hazel-oak.solihull.sch.uk

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents/carers should contact for more individual support with attendance is:

Kara Robinson, Deputy Head Teacher

Ange Wright, Family Support and Attendance Officer
0121 744 4162
office@hazel-oak.solihull.sch.uk

Procedures and Registers

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial to ensure safeguarding procedures are in place for children, for data analysis and to support statutory intervention, if necessary.

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately and in accordance with legislation.

Every half a day of absence from school (known as a session) is marked by the school as either authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised absence is where the head teacher has either given approval in advance for a pupil of to be absent or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence.

Unauthorised absences are absences which the school does not consider reasonable, exceptional, or unavoidable. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will be likely to have a detrimental impact on your child's education and the school may follow attendance procedures if a child is classed as persistently absent.

Procedures

If your child is absent from school, you must:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 8:30am
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 8:30am
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence

If your child is absent, we will:

- Contact you on the first and every subsequent day of absence by 10am if we have not heard from you.
- If we are unable to contact parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters/emails and a home visit may be made in the interests of safeguarding
- If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the Deputy Head Teacher should be informed.

- A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be “missing from education.”

Medical or Dental Appointments

Absence from school due to an unavoidable medical or dental appointment will be considered as an authorised absence.

Parents/carers are requested to provide written confirmation of these appointments. Whenever possible, parents/carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours.

Requests for leave of absence (exceptional circumstances)

The law is very clear that you are not entitled to take your child on holiday during term time, and you are likely to be referred for legal action if you choose to do this.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2013. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances"

A leave of absence will not be granted in term time unless the reasons are deemed exceptional by the Head Teacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the Head Teacher or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing on the prescribed form provided by the school. Where a parent/ carer removes a child when the application for leave was refused, or where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty notice may be requested by this school in accordance with the Solihull Code of Conduct. A Penalty Notice may be issued where there have been at least 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence for the purpose of a holiday.

Leave of Absence during Term Time

Leave of absence during term time will only be granted under exceptional circumstances or for approved educational experiences. Any requests should be put in writing to the Head Teacher on the school's Leave of Absence request form, available from the school office. Due to a change in legislation, there is no longer any entitlement to leave for holidays, and this will only be granted due to exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher's decision is final. If a leave of absence is requested, unauthorised and is still taken, this will be recorded as unauthorised and reported to the Education Enforcement Team, which could result in the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Procedure for Requesting a Planned Absence:

We will not authorise any leave of absence requests unless the circumstances are granted as exceptional. If you need to request this, complete an absence request form which is available by request from the school and submit this to the school at least two weeks prior to the date required to give the school sufficient time to consider the request and respond. If we are aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed, appropriate support will be offered to the parent/carer. There is a requirement that parent/carers provide evidence of exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher will consider requests for leave of absences and either authorise or unauthorise the leave of absence request. A letter confirming this will be sent to the parent/carer.

Leave that was taken which had not been granted will be marked as an unauthorised absence on the pupil's register. We may refer these absences to the Education Inclusion Service and this could result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

Other Absences

Other absences from school will be considered on an individual basis and a decision will be made by the Head Teacher to authorise or unauthorise the absence.

Absence Data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve. Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

REPORTING TO PARENTS AND CARERS

All absences, both authorised and unauthorised, and lateness will be reported to the parent/carer at the end of the academic year within their child's report. During the year, parent(s) will receive a letter if there are concerns about their child's attendance.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Attendance data will be analysed on a half-termly basis to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This will include pupils with: incomplete weeks; Monday and Friday absences; lateness; periods of extended absence. If concerns are raised by this analysis, parent discussions will occur, either through telephone calls to the parents/carers and/or formal letters stating the attendance and regular lateness of the child and that there is an issue. The School reserves the right to issue fixed term notices to parents.

The Head Teacher will monitor the impact of the attendance policy and will report attendance rates to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

Improving Attendance

If we are concerned about your child's attendance, we will:

- Write to you if your child's attendance is a concern and falls below 90%, or where punctuality is a concern
- Invite you into school to discuss the situation with our School Attendance Officer and Deputy Head Teacher if absences persist.
- Create a personalised action/support plan to address any barriers to attendance.
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services if appropriate
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions

Our aim is to work with you to address any reason for the absence and address issues early. We hope this early intervention will ensure that any issues are addressed quickly and successfully.

As Parents, you can support regular school attendance by:

- Making sure your child leaves for school with plenty of time to ensure they are not late for school.
- Making sure your child is ready for school before the arrival of the taxi if they access Education Transport
- Making medical appointments, such as dental/doctor appointments, outside school hours where possible
- Supporting and encouraging your child by attending parents' evenings and other events.
- Contacting the school to discuss any concerns regarding their child's attendance as soon as any issues arise.
- Working partnership with the school to resolve any issues that are impacting on your child's attendance.

Understanding Barriers to Attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, you as the parent/carer and the child. If as a parent /carer, you think their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with you and your family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Well-being support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities (see policy Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School). High expectations of attendance remain; however, we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners where appropriate.

Local Authority Attendance Support Services

As a school, we are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12.

The Local Authority has an Education Inclusion Team who work with schools, families, and other professionals, to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

As a parent/ carer, you are expected to work with the school and the Local Authority to address any attendance concerns. You should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice (Appendix 1). prosecution in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order, designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure improved attendance. The school will endeavour,

where possible, to solve attendance issues informally, before going down a formal / legal route.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can contribute to further absence. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed, miss vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

How we manage lateness:

- For all students (including 6th Form) the school day starts at **9am**. All students should be on-site (school or 6th Form) by this time ready to be taken in their classes.
- Registers are taken at 9.10am. If your child arrives in school between 9.10am and 9.20am they will receive a late mark 'L'.
- If your child arrives after 9.20am they must report to the School Office so that their attendance can be recorded. In accordance with the Regulations, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site - 'U', but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence and are marked absent for the whole morning session.
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding lateness

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with Kara Robinson, Deputy Head Teacher, but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time.

If you would like to discuss anything in this policy, please contact us at school to discuss further. Good attendance is everyone's responsibility and working together means issues are identified and addressed quickly and effectively. Good attendance means your child will have their best educational outcome.

Appendix 1

SOLIHULL MBC EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

EDUCATION ENFORCEMENT

Penalty Notice Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct under the Provision of The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulation 2004 and Subsection (1) Section 23 Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003; Statutory Instruments 2004, 181; 2005, 2029.

RATIONALE

Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at schools is, under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, a legal requirement, parents being responsible for ensuring that any child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. Compulsory school age is defined as: commencing at the start of term commencing on or after a child's fifth birthday and concluding on the last Friday in June of the school year in which the pupil becomes 16. It is also essential for pupils to attend school regularly in order to maximise the opportunities available to them. The Education Enforcement Team in Solihull will investigate cases of irregular attendance at school and instigate statutory action where appropriate.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 have amended Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Commencing on 27th February 2004, under the provisions of subsection (1) of section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, it will now be possible that in certain cases of unauthorised absence a penalty notice (*Appendix 5*) may be issued to the parent(s)/carer(s) responsible. Under these provisions the penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt. Non-payment will result in prosecution for non-school attendance under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996.

Solihull MBC will ensure the smooth administration of the necessary process and in order to fully comply with legislation on Human Rights will also ensure the consistent, fair and transparent application of fixed penalty notices

throughout Solihull. This Code of Conduct will govern the issuing of penalty notices across the borough.

GUIDANCE AND LEGISLATION

Persons authorised to operate this code must have regard to the following legislation and guidance: -

- The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- The Race Relations (Statutory Duties) Order 2001
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Children Act 1989
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Special Needs Code of Practice 2015
- Education Act 1996
- Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Section 576 Education Act 1996: Definition of a Parent

The education-related provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 apply to all parents who fall within the definition set out in this section of the Education Act 1996.

This defines 'parent' as:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although they are not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person – having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child is considered to be a parent in education law.

Throughout this document, references to 'parent' mean each and every parent coming within the definition, whether acting jointly or separately, and should not be taken to mean that provisions only apply to 'parent' in the singular

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be Issued

The issuing of penalty notices is considered appropriate in the following circumstances where the minimum trigger criteria have been met. Subject to these threshold criteria being met the Local Authority may consider issuing a penalty notice in the following circumstances.

1. In cases of absence from school, or a place of alternative educational provision, when the pupil has been taken on a “leave of absence” in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school (education provider), and the school have followed the Local Authority policy.

In such cases each parent will receive a separate penalty notice for each child taken out of school.

Should a parent fail or refuse to pay a penalty notice then the evidence provided by the school registration certificate (or that of alternative education provider) will be the primary information laid before the court.

2. In the early stages of concerns about a pupils unauthorised absence with a pupil and parent/carer where the Education Enforcement Officer may be of the opinion that the issuing of a penalty notice is appropriate e.g. where a parent/carer continually fails to provide an explanation for a pupil’s absence.
3. The Education Enforcement Team will assess any referrals or requests for the issuing of a penalty notice received from schools, Police or other Local Authorities. Where levels of unauthorised absence have reached the appropriate thresholds the issue of a penalty notice may be considered as an alternative to pursuing other forms of intervention.

PROCEDURE FOR THE ISSUE OF PENALTY NOTICES

- 1 The issue of penalty notices will be administered by Solihull MBC order to fully comply with legislation on Human Rights will also ensure the consistent, fair and transparent application of fixed penalty notices throughout Solihull and to ensure that provisions of this code do not have a negative impact on the range of forms of statutory intervention pursued by the Solihull MBC. Therefore, no penalty notices will be issued without the issue of relevant warning notices and the pursuance of relevant assessment of the case.
- 2 Where a request for leave of absence has been made and the school have sent written notification to parents that the absence will be unauthorised (*appendix 3*) a penalty notice (*appendix 6*) will be issued where the trigger of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence is met.
- 3 In all other cases of unauthorised absence accrued overtime a Warning letter will be issued by the Education Enforcement Team prior to a penalty notice. The trigger for a Warning letter will be at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence.

A penalty notice may be issued, subsequent to a Warning letter, if there are a further five sessions or more unauthorised absences.

- 4 The Education Enforcement Team will issue penalty notices by first class post, as there may be considerable health and safety implications involved in the operation of a hand/ face-to-face delivery mechanism.
- 5 The responsibility of the issue of fixed penalty notice will be retained by the Authority and held within the Education Enforcement Team. The Education Enforcement Team, in conjunction with the current Council revenue collection mechanisms, will ensure that the issue of penalty notices is closely monitored with the relevant financial penalty being imposed and collected.
- 6 In the case where the penalty has not been paid within 28 days of issue, the Education Enforcement Team will instigate statutory action under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996.
- 7 No one parent will receive more than two separate penalty notices resulting from the unauthorised absence of an individual child in any twelve-month period. Penalty notices will be issued to each parent of the child exhibiting the relevant patterns of unauthorised absence and, where appropriate, in respect of more than one child. Should further unauthorised absences be accrued the Local Authority will consider legal action under S441a of the Education Act
- 8 The Education Enforcement Team will receive referrals with regard to cases where the issue of penalty notices may be considered appropriate from schools in Solihull, Pupil Referral Units and other providers of alternative educational provision, the Police, other agencies and neighbouring authorities as appropriate.

Procedures for Withdrawing Penalty Notices

A penalty notice may be withdrawn by the Authority in any case in which the Authority determines that:

- a) It should not have been issued
- b) It should not have been issued to the person named as the recipient.
- c) contains material errors

Where a penalty notice has been withdrawn in accordance with the above, a notice of the withdrawal shall be given to the recipient and any amount paid by way of penalty in pursuance of that notice shall be repaid to the person who paid it.

No proceedings shall be continued or instituted against the recipient for the offence in connection with which the withdrawn notice was issued or for an offence under Section 444(1/1A) of the Education Act 1996 arising out of the same circumstances.

Payment of Penalty Notices

- The truancy penalty notice includes details of how to pay
1. The Authority will produce an auditor's statement as part of the usual audit procedure showing that income received from fines does not exceed enforcement as defined. The surplus, if any, must be surrendered to the consolidated fund.